## UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA CHARLESTON DIVISION

IN RE:

DAUFUSKIE ISLAND PROPERTIES,
LLC aka DAUFUSKIE ISLAND

RESORT & SPA,

Debtor.

Debtor.

Case No. 09-00389

Chapter 11

Debtor. 09-00389

Chapter 11

Deptor 12

Deptor 12

Deptor 13

Deptor 145 King Street

Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Deptor 15

Deptor 16:45 P.M.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE COURT'S RULING IN THE MATTERS (1) CONTINUED FINAL HEARING ON MOTION TO USE CASH COLLATERAL (MOTION AND MEMORANDUM FOR APPROVAL OF INTERIM AGREED ORDER (I) AUTHORIZING DEBTOR'S USE OF CASH COLLATERAL AND (II) PROVIDING ADEQUATE PROTECTION AND GRANTING LIENS, SECURITY INTERESTS AND OTHER RELIEF TO AFG, LLC}(DOC. 14). (2) EXPEDITED MOTION TO REJECT TRANSFER AGREEMENT OF 1996 (DOC. 74). (3) EXPEDITED MOTION TO INCUR DEBT AND FOR APPROVAL OF POST PETITION DEBTOR IN POSSESSION FINANCING AND ASSOCIATED RELIEF (DOC. 79).

BEFORE HONORABLE JOHN E. WAITES UNITED STATES CHIEF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

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(As requested, only the portion of the Court's ruling is transcribed.)

THE COURT: Would you please be seated? Nossokoff, I need to ensure before I indicate a ruling, inquire about the status of Item Number 1 on the docket, the continued final hearing on the motion to use cash collateral.

MR. NOSSOKOFF: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: This is the AFG loan, I guess?

MR. NOSSOKOFF: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: So, where does that stand? Should I enter an order in regards to that, or is it dependent upon the ruling? I don't want to neglect to finally validate a loan process in which monies passed.

MR. NOSSOKOFF: We would not let you do that. We had talked about that just a few minutes ago, that I think it's all really dependent upon the rulings that you issue today. Mr. Kerr can speak for himself, but I think he certainly is not in favor of going forward with the use cash collateral. obviously assert our right to do so.

And so if the DIP's allowed first as a subordinated cash collateral right, and if it's not allowed, we still would push the use of cash collateral, but obviously we need it for purposes coming up for this week anyway. So, I would suggest that I would like the order entered.

> THE COURT: Okay.

MR. NOSSOKOFF: Okay.

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THE COURT: I follow you.

MR. NOSSOKOFF: And --

MR. KERR: And, Your Honor, we object. We don't consent to the use of cash collateral. We have -- we had a deadline for a February interest payment. It passed. We extended, based on the good graces of our client, that deadline until the order that Your Honor entered earlier this week, and a payment is due tomorrow. But --

THE COURT: Okay. Well, don't let me leave without addressing it further today.

MR. KERR: All right.

THE COURT: Because I didn't want to overlook it, and then there'd be some critical need to address it. I wasn't sure whether it was a final approval of what had been done or, as I understand it, it's still an issue -- could be an issue of contest in going forward. So -- all right.

The -- I'd like to offer some comments at this time which would be an indication of ruling on the matters before the Court today. And specifically the motion to reject the transfer agreement filed by the debtor in possession and the motion to incur debt.

As I indicated in some statements earlier, there are various cases from around the country that address the issue first on the motion to reject, whether options are executory or

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1 not and, therefore, subject to this summary process, a 2 rejection by a trustee or a debtor in bankruptcy -- debtor in possession in bankruptcy. Still fewer cases that I've read address the significance of the indication that -- or obligation that covenants run with the land. There were other issues that have been raised in this case by the parties.

Many of the cases that I have read depend upon the laws of the State in which they -- in which the contract or the agreement is entered, which govern the nature of the enforceability of the agreements at issue. And all that I have read depend upon an interpretation of the subject agreement and assert the intent of the parties to that agreement.

A reference to these various national authorities, and even the law of South Carolina when necessary to make this determination, has been of some help, but of limited help to the Court in this matter.

What I am convinced of is that a determination of the motion to reject in this case depends upon the language of this agreement and the documents that relate to it as entered by the parties.

The parties' critical rights at issue today, as you have all argued and all have known, depend upon what has been indicated as Article 5.1 of the transfer agreement.

The burden of prevailing on the motion to reject 25  $\parallel$  falls upon the debtor or the movant in this case.

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I am also convinced that this Court is bound by the 2 terms of Section 365 of the Bankruptcy Code and State law. that I cannot invoke any equitable authorities or Section 105 4 of the Bankruptcy Code to determine these issues.

It's been stated the decision today is driven by this fairly early in the case lending motion which, upon itself, should fall or rise upon the bankruptcy law that applies to it. And I'll make a determination of it following a ruling on the transfer agreement.

This Court can't make any use of its determinations based upon how I wish it would turn out, or the sympathies that I have for any parties, or even the dilemma that the parties have gotten themselves in.

I am keenly interested in a reorganization working out, and that all constituents, creditors, secured and unsecured, investors, you know, we're always interested in all of you recovering your investments and your money.

We also are interested in reorganizations working because assets are valuable and should be -- continue to be a value to the community. And in this case, I consider these -the assets at issue to be important to the State of South Carolina.

But for the reasons that I will summarize and set out in a written order to be prepared after today, I find that the motion to reject should be denied.

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I'm indicating this ruling, and I'm declaring the 2 rights as I interpret it that are only necessary to determine I am sensitive that this should not be a full and the motion.  $4 \parallel$  final adjudication of all the rights between the parties. And I feel that many of these issues should be addressed in an adversary proceeding that could be filed before this Court.

In looking at the agreement at issue, in my view, the critical provision is not a right of first refusal which necessitates an offer, an action by a third party. But it is an unexercised option.

I believe that Article 5 of Article 5.1 is, in fact, 12 divisible and not part of the -- should not be construed as part of the agreement as determined by the intent of the parties.

By its nature and purpose, it's susceptible to division under the authority cited by Mr. Summerall. addition to that, the Columbia Architectural Group case, the Packard and Field case.

These sections are not -- the general transfer agreement in this one section appear by its language to be intended to be separate. They are not necessarily dependent upon each other.

The transfer agreement, for instance, contemplates a failure, that any failure to perform the additional obligations would be a default, to be identified by notice from the non-

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 $1 \parallel$  defaulting party, and actually provides an opportunity to cure. 2 The remedy section of the entire agreement specifies arbitration as the remedy, and allows equitable enforcement, even specific performance of the transfer agreement.

There is a certain mutuality of obligations. Whereas, Section 5.1 is viewed by this Court as an option. is, as counsel has argued, only triggered by the debtor's -oh, in this case, the debtor's election not to perform, and then provides the -- and I guess can say -- MCI the option of making a further decision.

It's not part of the default or remedy section under the transfer agreement. It's not cross referenced to those matters.

It is the only place in the transfer agreement where the parties specify that it is a covenant running with the land, and it emphasizes the need for recording in specified In my view, it is a contract within a contract. language.

The determination then would be whether that option 19 fits within the definition of executory contract, which the parties have noted as defined by <a href="Countryman">Countryman</a> to be an instance when the obligation of both parties are so far unperformed that the failure of either to complete performance would constitute a material breach, excusing the performance of the other party.

In my view, the unexercised option on the date of the petition does not constitute unperformed obligations on the

1 part of the parties.

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I agree with the authority, and some of which I'll 3 mention by case name: The Robert Helms case, the Burke case, 4 the BYN Funding case versus U.S. Air, the National Financial 5 case, and I'm not sure how to pronounce it, <u>Gouveia</u>, G-O-V --6 G-O-U-V-E-I-A.

In this instance, these authorities indicate, and I agree with them, that at the time of the petition, which is the critical date, there had been no election made by the debtor. Therefore, creating no obligations under the option on either party.

I'd also note that it appears to the Court the consideration had previously passed that the -- that upon the exercise of any option, there would be limited and equal assumption of liabilities for the reconveyance. And in many instances, I interpreted it as similar to returning to the status quo before the transfer.

I believe the facts in our case is distinguishable from the <u>Lubrizol</u> and my previous case in <u>Ducane</u> -- or order in Ducane.

I would further and separately indicate that even if this were an executory contract, as we all know, that if it was rejected, it's deemed a breach. But that breach does not mean termination of the rights between the parties. I'm not fully sure that upon determination -- the termination to adjudication

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that the -- MCI would not be entitled to specific performance 2 as a remedy.

South Carolina law indicates in a number of decisions 4 that when performance is closely connected to specified real 5 estate, that equitable remedies are preferred. And I would cite or mention the Murray versus Northwestern case, the Ingram and a case Adam versus Willis.

Finally, I believe for purposes of determining this motion that the rights embodied in Article 5.1 do constitute 10∥property interest under South Carolina law. I believe it meets all the indications that are required by the T2 Green case, the expressed attention -- intention of the parties, the requirement that intention concerns the land. Clearly the language was intended to mean this in my view. It was intended to be specialized language to bind parties and successors in title to these provisions.

It was further substantiated by the fact that the parties consistently recognized these rights and recorded instruments, that they were subject of discussion and preservation in the transfer to the debtor. And that as indicated by the evidence today, was mentioned in deeds, mortgages, and title insurance property.

Further, I'd find that as a property interest, it is not subject to Section 365 and, therefore, not subject to rejection. At the very least, I believe that the property

1 rights that the -- this party has is a right to enforce 2 provisions of the agreement. It's a right that springs from the ownership of property from the taking of title -- of the 4 passing of title.

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But it could -- it could very well be that they're unalterable rights that are subject to -- not subject to damages as a breach, but are subject to enforcement by injunction or specific performance. And South Carolina recognized the injunction remedy in the case of Houck versus Rivers.

I further believe that 7001 is the proper rule to  $12 \parallel$  apply to this kind of determination. That while I understand the debtor's need is to seek this determination as early as possible in the case, it is my view that it is a determination of the validity of rights of the party. And further, it is seeking the Court to full and finally declare the rights of parties which are matters covered by 7001.

I think that this matter is such a close call in many respects that had I decided that it were an executory contract subject to rejection, before allowing it to be a final order in which a party would then be able to take precedent by a further order of lending over these interests, I would stay the effect of the decision for purposes of an appeal, which I recognize would be problematic for the loan at issue today.

For those general reasons, which I'm sure, and I

1 apologize for not being very articulate in stating them, but 2 | it's been a long day. But I'm satisfied and convinced that even in this hard, hard decision, that it's the right decision 4 under the law. And it's the best decision that I could make.

And, therefore, I would deny the motion to reject 6 this as an executory contract.

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I'd ask Mr. Summerall or Mr. Beard to prepare a written order that I'd review that would include the citations that I made, and other citations of authority that you argued.

Now, with that being said, I would next turn to the issue before the Court of the request for a motion to incur debt. I understand from Mr. Nossokoff that the statement's been made that the lending is predicated upon the Court order rejecting this interest. I have not done that. So, where does that stand? Mr. Crawford or Mr. Nossokoff?

The question is about priming the MR. NOSSOKOFF: rights, if it is a property right, can it be primed. If I hear His Honor correctly, he may be speaking then about determining what the property rights are. And if you're going to  $\underline{T2}$ , the T2 case, that's where you were there. You're determining the rights of the parties under an adversary proceeding and how far the property rights may go. So --

> I think that's correct. THE COURT:

MR. NOSSOKOFF: Okay. If that's the case --

THE COURT: It wouldn't be done today. It would be a

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All right. So, the answer is no. MR. NOSSOKOFF: Then the lender stands by its commitment and will not allow the 4 commitment to go forward.

THE COURT: Okay. Then in terms of a further ruling on the propriety of the motion to incur debt, it seems to be moot at this time.

Okay. In conclusion, I would say, as I introduced these statements to you, that I wish there was a way. And I suggest to the parties that the only way to be successful in this case is to all work together, as you have attempted to do so far, and for which I commend you for. But I mean the proof is in any ability to sell property. And at present, the debtor is in possession. And the debtor -- and the benefit to all constituents, it seems to me, is to have some sort of process by which property is sold.

The testimony was that it should be in an environment which promotes the highest value. It is no fault of anyone's, I think, and I see it in many, many cases, but it's no solace to you folks who suffer the consequences. But it's no fault that the economy is in such a circumstance that we cannot be as hopeful or as -- or to receive the -- to accept the hopes of parties that sales will turn around, different than the history. And that everything will be better through the summer months. It's just not -- I'm not convinced from the evidence

1 presented that it's a sure thing, or it's even likely.

I think, though, that, therefore, it requires the parties to, in some way, consider whether their cooperation and their support for each other could create that, as favorable a marketing environment as you possibly can. Because certainly if sales were to pick up and to be accomplished, then secured lenders would be paid, investors would be paid, and unsecured creditors would have hopes of a dividend.

So, why I am preaching to the choir because all of you are more experienced than I? I do think that's probably where you are.

But to the extent that there are suggestions for other remedies or other belief that may have been discussed as part of the motions or lending proposals today, they just have to be brought by motion and we'll consider them at the time.

So, it's been a long day for all of us, and I stand on these statements and ask for that order from Mr. Summerall.

The other matter, the motion to incur debt, for the record is considered moot or withdrawn. I'll consider it withdrawn by the debtor based upon those statements.

I wish you luck.

MR. SUMMERALL: Your Honor, if I may, first of all, all of the parties thank you for your diligence because it has been a hard day. And Melrose Club will continue to work with these parties.

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What I really stood up to say is -- to ask you when  $2 \parallel$  you would like the proposed order by? And I wish I could tell you I could get it to you by Friday, but I am going to be out 4 of state on vacation from Saturday until Thursday afternoon. So, I would ask possibly two weeks from today to submit the proposed order. THE COURT: What do you say about that? Any party comment on that? Or object to it? Or --MR. LESEMANN: Your Honor, if I could have a --(Pause) MR. LESEMANN: That's fine, Your Honor. THE COURT: Okay. All right. MR. SUMMERALL: Thank you, sir. THE COURT: Now there is the final hearing on the motion for cash collateral. Now, we have the opportunity if -and not to beg the question, but it seems to me that I have some time tomorrow morning. It kind of depends on where you are and whether you need further discussions and whether you --MR. KERR: Your Honor, Robert Kerr for AFG. My

client's in Denver, two hours behind us. I do have some time. I'd like to confer with them just to give them the lay of the land, some rulings from today, effect the call, and I need to bring them up-to-speed. We do have some time to talk midmorning.

THE COURT: What time? 10 or 10:30?

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(The Court conferring off the record)

THE COURT: I would suggest that you arrive at 10 tomorrow, if it suits your schedule. And it may be that I couldn't hear you at 10, but I had matters scheduled at 10:30 that have been removed, right?

(The Court conferring off the record)

THE COURT: So, that would allow you to address it in the morning before I left Charleston.

MR. KERR: All right. Thank you.

THE COURT: So, we continue --

MR. KERR: Without prejudice to the rights of Melrose Club, Inc.

THE COURT: We would continue it. And, you know, anyone that needs to be here can be here. But it just is too to try to take us a contested -- further contested matter, it seems to me. And I understand, at least from what I heard of the testimony, it varied as far as shutdown today. I am not interested in these facilities being shutdown, but I don't -- you know, I can't create money for you. So, it does sound like you can carry through the weekend, potentially. So, tomorrow wouldn't be a prejudice to anyone to hear it.

MR. NOSSOKOFF: No.

THE COURT: Okay?

MR. NOSSOKOFF: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Anything else?

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